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When building curriculums for children, members of development teams should go beyond team organizational problems and become aware of the individuality, the gregariousness, the differing patterns of physical and mental growth, and the varying experiences of children as well as the need for flexible grouping practices, learning reinforcement, and problem-centered curricular relevance. (SP)

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Curriculum Development in A Teaching Team

By Robert LeRoy Friedli*

A problem of significant magnitude for the teaching team is that of developing a meaningful and practical curriculum. It is an irony that many teams become so concerned with the structure and organization of the team that they overlook the paramount purpose of team teaching—to improve the quality of instruction in a well-organized and planned curriculum that provides for the individual differences of all students.

It is obvious that curriculum development in the traditional setting and curriculum development in the team setting can have much in common. The teaching team, however, will have additional problems because of its unique organizational pattern.

The involvement of teachers in curriculum development leads to some crucial problems: Teachers, for example, need to realize that in planning for a curriculum, this entails not only what subject will be taught, and by whom, and what time, but also how it is to be taught and how it relates to the child and his environment. They need to be able to assess the scope and sequence of subject matter and decide the direction they will steer for the youngsters they teach—expanding some areas and limiting others, grouping and regrouping, constantly modifying the learning situation to fit the individual students.

The idea of how society affects the development of curriculum is another crucial planning concept for the team to understand and to implement if they are going to make the curriculum meaningful. Great is the need for the team to understand the locale in which they are teaching and its values, folkways and mores, as well as the resounding relationship of the educational program to the community, the state, and the nation.

The team also needs to be aware of the center of empha sis it has chosen for the curriculum. Years ago the curriculum was totally subject-centered. During the era of John Dewey and Progressivism, it was pushed toward the child. Sometime during the thirties and early forties, the direction was modified toward a curriculum based upon social issues, i.e., society-centered, which has led to the problem-centered curriculum of today.

In curriculum development, as with any team endeavor. there are several basic generalizations that can guide the teaching team:

1. *All children are individuals and therefore each child is unique in his own being.*

   Educators tend to become so involved in grouping techniques and the teaching of subject matter that they often forget to teach children.

2. *All children are gregarious by nature.*

   All youngsters basically want to be involved in activities of some type with other youngsters. While it is true that some children withdraw from peer groups and break all apparent social relations, they still have drives to be accepted by others.

3. *Children of the same chronological age vary enormously within their patterns of physical and mental growth and development.*

   This does not infer that grouping practices are bad or useless, merely that children are more different than alike.

4. *Children of the same chronological age have experienced* a wide variety of environmental factors.

   In many cases, students act as invironmental factors have conditioned them. When viewed in this perspective, the actions and responses of children have more meaning and can be viewed in terms of environmental conditioning.

5. *Grouping practices must be flexible and changing—never static and binding.*

   There is no justifiable reason for a teaching team to hold to rigid groupings. Grouping must change and be modified to meet different learning situations.

6. *The curriculum must provide opportunities for each child to achieve and feel degrees of success.*

   One of the best, if not the best means of reinforcing learning is to let students feel success and achievement. One of the fastest ways of curbing learning and frustrating students is to involve them in projects where they do not feel some degree of success.

Curriculum development for the teaching team is one of the most important cooperative efforts they participate in. It requires constant planning, evaluation and modification. But above all, curriculum planning and development demand that teachers go beyond mere mechanical and organizational considerations.

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